

Extreme Violence and Climate Change Linked by Scientists

Added by **Oskar Guzman** on August 2, 2013.
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If you thought your bad mood was normal on a humid, hot or rainy day, well, the Journal of Science says it is not. According to the magazine, violence is triggered by climate change.

For centuries, human behavior has been linked with nature, whether it is the moon or the constellations in the sky, meaning we are all connected in one way or another. It was only recently that scientists understood those connections.

A new study published by Princeton University and UC Berkeley's Science Department reveals the link between violence and climate change. The scientists found a connection between riots, institutional breakdown, civil war, and climate change.

If the predictions are accurate, the world's heat is going to increase by 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. The results lead them to think that if weather keeps changing, so will human behavior.

For the study, the scientists measured a meta-analysis of 60 studies, including archaeology, criminology, economics and psychology. The study went back to 10,000 B.C. to the present day.

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Violent behavior was present under hotter and wetter conditions.

Researchers found that although climate change is not the primary cause of violence, it is a key factor when societies collide and have tensions between each other. According to the study, incidences of war might increase by as much as 56 percent and personal violence could increase by 16 percent, because of climate change between now and 2050.

Lead author, Solomon Hsiang explains that now policymakers and governments can intervene, “we think that by collecting all the research together now, we’re pretty clearly establishing that there is a causal relationship between the climate and human conflict.” Also Hsiang said, “People have been skeptical up to now an individual study here and there. But considering the body of work together, we can now show that these patterns are extremely general. It is more the rule than the exception.”

Additionally, extreme climatic conditions have aggravated violence in three different categories, regardless of geography, wealth and time in history. For instance, India and Australia have had domestic violence when there was climate change. Also, the United States and Tanzania have experienced more assaults and murders when the weather is drier and hotter. Europe and South Asia also had ethnic violence linked to temperature. Besides that, the collapse of ancient empires is linked to climate change. For example, the data suggests that the fall of the Mayan civilization is in relation to extreme weather conditions.

Edward Miguel, Oxfam Professor of Environmental and Resource Economics at Berkley, said about the phenomenon, “we often think of modern society as largely independent of the environment, due to technological advances, but our findings challenge that notion. The climate appears to be critical factor sustaining peace and wellbeing across human societies.”

Furthermore, researchers explained that climate change is linked to violence, because many times it results in migration, following confrontation with the existing residents.

On the other hand, as the Atlantic magazine says, “Armed conflict has globally declined over the past 50 years or so, even though the world has been warming the entire time.” For that, Hsiang has an answer, “our study is not saying that climate is the only cause of conflict, and there is not conflict that we think should be wholly attributed to some specific climatic event.” However, he says, “we are trying to point out is that climate is one of the critical factors that affect how things escalate, and if they escalate to the point of violence.”

Marshall Burke, a UC Berkeley graduate student explain, “We like to compare it to smoking. In the 1930s scientists were figuring out there was this really strong relationship between smoking and lung cancer, but it wasn’t for many decades after they figured out the precise mechanism that links smoking to lung cancer.”

The findings about the link between violence and climate change are alarming for both policy makers and individuals alike. It might be an important call for action, and for individuals, it is a wake up call. There may be results explaining to us why we act in certain ways under changing climate circumstances.

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SOURCES: [The Atlantic](#), [Princeton University](#), [Los Angeles Times](#)



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Ray

August 2, 2013 at 7:28 pm

Horse sh!t



yeahOkWhatever

August 2, 2013 at 11:52 am

correlation does not imply causation, and no example of violence prevented due to cold weather has been shown. violence happens when people are unhappy, and this is usually due to financial problems or a perceived injustice. heat has very little to do with it. but if you cherry pick your statistics and include 3rd world countries in the desert, vs places like Canada, you can pretend global warming will make us into psychotic monkeys. in reality it is religious disputes, poverty, population density, warped social environments, and unequal treatment that cause violence. Florida is less violent than New York or Russia, but im sure this study ignored that. violence is as low as it has ever been, and getting lower, and it is being reported at a much higher rate these days. we are becoming more civilized, even as the planet heats up. good luck on the peer review process, im interested in where this research goes. maybe we can one day fix the middle east by dropping some Air Conditioners on them.

Pingback: [Hot under the collar: Study links climate change to rising tempers - Fox News | TotalNewsWatch.com](#)



Alberto

August 2, 2013 at 11:16 am

I agree with the comment posted by Gerald. The research falls into the trap of correlation versus causation. Modeling of civil unrest over the past century in 170 countries points to the role of stress accumulation, geography, and social networks as the mechanisms of social instability, see interesting discussion at

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21829234.300-brazil-uprising-points-to-rise-of-leaderless-networks.html#.Ufu8522wW1d>

<http://www.theage.com.au/digital-life/digital-life-news/protest-in-the-connected-society-20130726-2qoyd.html>



Gerald Wilhite

August 2, 2013 at 11:08 am

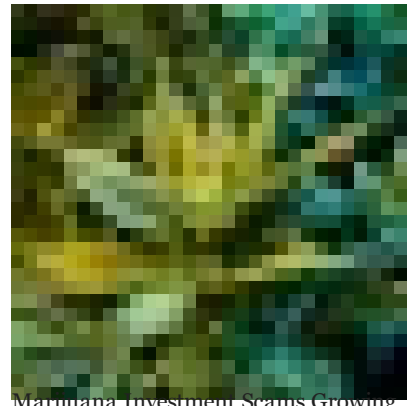
The German newspaper's 'Spiegel Online Science' strongly criticizes this paper, citing a lack of robustness of its statistics as the main problem.

Twenty seven studies were examined. Eleven of the statistically reliable studies said climate change could increase risk of conflicts in some cases, lower in others, or have no effect. Of these, only three were considered in the study even though the authors were well aware of them.

Distorting the data was not the only problem. Predictions of climate-enhancing aggression were said to be greatly exaggerated.

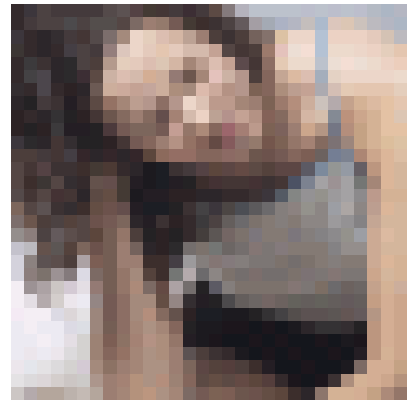
You will need Google's translator to read the paper (unless you are fluent in German, of course):

<http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/natur/klimawandel-studie-ueber-gewalt-anstieg-stoesst-auf-heftige-kritik-a-913966.html>



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